

REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA.

Visit of Its President Has Much Significance.

The Nicaraguan Canal Enterprise—Characteristics of the Country—Its Importance in the Central American Group—People and Government.

The assembling of Congress and the prospect of important legislation and executive action with reference to the Nicaraguan canal has served to attract to Washington an unusual number of distinguished citizens from Central America. The most important of our visitors is President Iglesias, of Costa Rica. The details of the mission upon which this gentleman came have not yet been developed, but it is understood that the business in hand referred largely to the Isthmian canal and the relations of the United States to the enterprise. While the canal is expected to pass through what has always been considered Nicaraguan territory the Costa Rican Government claims that their boundary line passes down the center of the San Juan River, which is to be used for canal purposes. What other matters Don Iglesias has on his mind will probably be developed in the course of the winter. Don Iglesias left the city last week.

Costa Rica is the most southerly of the Central American States, and in many respects the most advanced. It is a sort of irregular parallelogram lying between Nicaragua on the one side and the United States of Colombia in South America, on the other side, and thus may be termed the Isthmian republic. Its people are in dependent and progressive, as Spanish-Americans go, and so far have refused to unite in the attempt to effect a federation of Central American states, which has been under discussion and trial at various times for several years. The dissolution of the United States of Central America through a revolution in San Salvador seems to justify the refusal of Costa Rica to take part in the movement, as being at this time premature and of doubtful practicality. The country, having a long coast upon both the Atlantic and Pacific, enjoys a peculiarly advantageous position so far as ocean commerce is concerned, possessing one or two good harbors on the Atlantic side and quite a number upon the Pacific coast.

The population of the country is mostly white, consisting of about 250,000 people, descendants of immigrants from Galicia in Spain. There are only about 4,000 of the native Indians left, but the blacks descended from various tribes imported to the West Indies originally from Africa are quite numerous.

EDUCATION AND RAILROADS.

The people of Costa Rica must be considered as standing high above those of the neighboring countries in regard to morals and civilization. The mass of the people are industrious, honest, sober, clean, economical, obedient to the authorities and respectful to the laws.

Costa Rica holds the first place of all Latin American nations in regard to public instruction. In 1893 there were 327 primary schools with 21,913 enrolled pupils, or 53 per cent. of all the children of school age. There are 784 teachers, of whom 327 are men and 457 women. Their average monthly salary is 45 pesos. There are more teachers than soldiers.

Higher education is given in the Liceo de Costa Rica, and in the Colegio Superior de Señoritas; also in the Provincial Institute of Cartago, Alajuela and Heredia. For the highest education the Government pays the expenses of 10 Costa Ricans in foreign Universities and High Schools.

Port Limon, on the Atlantic, and Puntarenas, on the Pacific side, are the principal ports. In 1896, 258 steamers and 41 sailing vessels entered Port Limon, and 152 vessels entered Puntarenas. There are two railroads, the Atlantic and the Pacific Railroads. The Atlantic line runs from Port Limon westerly to Alajuela, a distance of 115 miles, and has important branches. The Pacific Road runs from Puntarenas 14 miles to Espartero, and in 1896 earned 18,496.90 pesos from freights and 13,262.80 pesos from passengers.

Another railroad, the Government account, is under construction to connect San Jose with the Pacific coast, and a million pesos are annually set aside for the work.

A line of railway is projected to run from Jimenez, on the Guapiles branch of the Costa Rica Railway, 56 miles from Port Limon, to the mouth of the Rio Frio, near its entrance into the Lake of Nicaragua. Such a railway would contribute enormously to the commerce of the northern Costa Rica. The region traversed by the line is highly fertile.

An important project contemplated by President Iglesias is a ship canal along the coast line from Matina to the Colorado River, and on to the mouth of the San Juan, a total distance of over 45 miles. This ship canal would open an extensive banana region, as well as excellent lands for the cultivation of cacao and rubber trees and many other tropical plants.

SOME NATURAL PRODUCTS.

The agricultural product of this country is mainly coffee. The crop of 1897 yielded 227,582 bags of 132 pounds each. Most of it went to England. Another important product is the banana, of which 1,602,102 bunches were exported in 1896. The production of sugar is about 20,000,000 pounds annually.

Rice of a very superior quality is grown, two crops being obtained a year with very little care and no irrigation. Beans and corn are successfully grown everywhere in the country.

The important agricultural districts are, besides the Central Highlands, which are about 90 miles in length by 36 miles in width, the great valleys of Salama, Santa Clara, Tortuguero, San Carlos, and Rio Frio. Along the Pacific the great valley of Tarraha and the plains of Follu Dulce and Guapiles are fertile regions which, if properly tilled, would offer advantages equal to the Central Highlands, where nearly the entire population of Costa Rica is concentrated.

Considering the future of Costa Rica the question of farm labor is of vital importance. The few Indians are rapidly decreasing. It looks as though the fertile lowlands on the Atlantic and Pacific sides, as well as those in the extensive

and fruitful San Juan Valley, must be turned over to the negro race as the only one capable of enduring so inhospitable a climate. These regions are the richest of all, and could sustain a large population.

Costa Rica has vast pasture lands splendidly adapted to cattle. It has very nutritious forage plants, like arrowweed, cola de venado, zacate de guinea, zacate de castilla, zacate para, zacate aneate, grama, guate, cana de azucar, gamalote, sabanalilla, teosinte, lengua de vaca, guineo, jengibreillo, plantainillo, etc. In 1892 the number of the cattle in the country numbered 24,065; horses, 77,043; sheep, 2,765; swine, 62,328.

The total value of the natural, agricultural and livestock products of the country is placed at 19,000,000 pesos.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.

Costa Rica's commercial movement in 1896 comprised \$3,597,727 gold, of exports, and \$4,745,818 gold, of imports.

The exports were made up of coffee, \$2,518,255.20; bananas, 1,412,102 bunches, valued at \$676,072.50; various woods, \$485,095; corn and other metal, \$29,432.50, and various other commodities.

The imports during the same year consisted largely of breadstuffs and dairy produce, machinery, cotton goods, furniture, wire, woolens, wines, drugs, and shoes.

This trade was divided as follows: United States, \$1,011,074.25 gold; England, \$1,264,556.33; Germany, \$882,816.06; France, \$378,303.25; Cuba, \$102,325.35, and other countries in diminishing quantities.

The customs duties are collected on the gross weight and generally amount to from 20 to 25 per cent. ad valorem. They are paid one-half down and one-half in three months' time.

The revenue of the Government is derived from custom house duties, revenue stamps and stamped paper, liquor monopoly, tobacco, coffee tax, sale of public land, tax for registering property, etc., and amounted in 1896 to 7,456,616 pesos.

The foreign debt of 2,000,000 sterling

legislative power is represented by a board of five commissioners appointed by Congress.

Judicial power is lodged in a Supreme Court and in subordinate tribunals as constituted by the judiciary.

The judicial power is changed every four years. Suffrage is restricted to popular conventions, which choose a limited number of electors.

These meet in a body called the Electoral Assembly and proceed to choose the President of the Republic and the Congressmen.

The Republic is divided into five provinces and two comarcas or territories. Both are divided into cantones, and the cantones are subdivided into districts.

The territories are represented in Congress in the same way as the provinces. Each cantone has a municipal organization, and each district has a political chief named by the President. In each of the provinces or territories there is a Governor and a military commandant, also named by the President, and a Judge of First Instance, appointed by the Supreme Court.

All Costa Ricans between 18 and 50 years of age are obliged to do military service according to law. The army is divided into two parts: the first includes, under the head of active service, all soldiers from 18 to 40 years of age; the second comprises all the rest, under the head of "reserve." There is a third division, known as the National Guard, including all citizens capable of bearing arms outside of the foregoing.

The celebrated Cornish American Pianos and Organs.

We are quite sure that our readers will have noticed that for many years advertisements of the Cornish American Pianos and Organs have been appearing regularly in this journal. We are confident, therefore, that they will be glad to see our special attention directed to their special attention to the advertisement that appears in our present issue, from which we observe that this enterprising firm are more gone out than ever in giving the general public the privilege of purchasing what are really first-class Pianos and Organs at prices that cannot be elsewhere obtained. The quality of the goods is of consideration. Messrs. Cornish & Company have been in business for nearly fifty years, and in spite of this record and in spite of the hundreds of thousands of Cornish American Pianos and Organs that have been sold during this period there are still people who think that the instruments are of the highest and highest grade because they are sold at least 15 per cent. cheaper than agents, dealers and music stores sell organs and pianos. The Cornish American Pianos and Organs are manufactured in one of the finest and best equipped factories in this country.

Messrs. Cornish & Company have certainly placed within the reach of everyone, no matter how humble their circumstances may be, a first-class musical instrument. There is a guarantee that these instruments are of the first quality. The Cornish American Pianos and Organs are manufactured in one of the finest and best equipped factories in this country.

Messrs. Cornish & Company will furnish you their handsome catalogues upon request, and those of our readers who do not want to purchase at present would do well to secure this handsome catalogue, which we understand has been prepared at a very great expense, and which describes all the Pianos and Organs manufactured by this thoroughly reliable concern, and gives valuable information to all lovers of music. A postal card to Cornish & Company, Washington, New Jersey, will secure it.

We wish to introduce our desirable Premier Perforated Piano every household and family in the United States, where it is so much needed. We will send you one of these beautiful and useful pianos, as above, to anyone who will fill out the enclosed form, and send it to us. We will send you one of these beautiful and useful pianos, as above, to anyone who will fill out the enclosed form, and send it to us.

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colones in Costa Rica, and the Government ordered, further more, a second emission of 400,000 colones in pieces of 20 colones each. It is further willing to coin half a million more in the near future. The Costa Rica Bank on the other hand, is obliged to retire a corresponding amount of its notes from circulation, and, later, as soon as sufficient gold can be put in circulation, the exchange of bills is to be made by this bank in gold instead of silver.

METHODS OF GOVERNMENT.

Costa Rica is a republic, the Government of which is representative, the representatives being classified, so that one-half retires every two years.

Legislative powers are vested in a single house, whose members are chosen, one for every 8,000 inhabitants, for a term of four years, by an electoral college. This body assembles every year on May 1 for a 60 days' session, which may be extended for 30 days more. During the intervals between sessions of Congress

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